



**Advisory Announcement**  
*For Immediate Release: March 29, 2023*

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**SITKA SOUND HERRING FISHERY UPDATE # 14**

Today's aerial survey covered Sitka Sound from as far south as Windy Passage, Shelikof Bay to the west, and as far north as Salisbury Sound. Survey conditions were good with mostly clear skies and 20-knot winds. Herring schools were seen from the aerial survey in Leesoffskaia Bay, Aleutkina Bay, St. John Baptist Bay, and Sukoi Inlet. Approximately 8.3 nmi of active herring spawn was seen including at St. Lazaria Island and the continued spawn on the southern and southeastern Kruzof Island shoreline from Cape Edgecumbe to around Shoals Point and south of Fred's Creek (Figure 1). Herring predators were concentrated around Shoals Point and Low Island, near the Causeway, and south of Peisar Island.

Department and industry vessels surveyed Sitka Sound from Harbor Point to Fred's Creek, in Hayward Strait, and from Indian River to Peisar Island. Several very large schools of herring were located on sonar near Inner Point and near Peisar Island. Numerous other schools of herring were observed from Harbor Point to Middle Island.

Two successful test sets were conducted today; the results are as follows:

Time	Area	Tons	% Mature Roe	% Immature Roe	Avg weight	% Female
8:35	Inner Point	300	11.2 %	0.93 %	148 g	46.8 %
9:27	Inner Point	100	11.3 %	1.3 %	134 g	52.7 %

Herring mortality associated with test sets is likely minimal and there is no evidence that the small number of fish taken has any measurable impact on the subsistence fishery. Nevertheless, to ensure reasonable opportunity for subsistence harvest of herring roe would not be negatively impacted by test setting, prior to authorizing test fishing in this area the department considered the following: 1) the area sampled today was outside the commercial closed waters and core subsistence areas; and 2) the fish encountered during test fishing represented a small fraction of the overall biomass in each area.

An opening of the Sitka Sound herring sac roe fishery occurred today from 11:45 a.m. until 12:45 p.m., as stated in field announcement on VHF channel 10. The open area for this fishery included the waters of Sitka Sound south of 57°07.20' N lat, north of 57°02.90' N lat, and west of 135°31.25' W long (Figure 2). The emergency order corresponding with today's opening is EO 1H0323. Harvest estimates from today's fishery will be included on the next fishery update. The harvest estimate from the fishery that occurred on March 28 was approximately 650-tons of herring.

The department has determined that the opening described above would not harm a reasonable opportunity for participants in the subsistence fishery to harvest the amount of roe necessary for subsistence uses. When making this determination, the department considered: 1) vessel surveys conducted by the department beginning on March 23 indicated that there is a very large biomass of herring distributed within Sitka Sound; 2) numerous herring schools were observed within regulatory closed waters on today's vessel survey from Harbor Point to Middle Island; 3) while there was herring spawn observed near Fred's Creek today, there were no known subsistence branch sets in that area; 4) herring began spawning in Sitka Sound on March 26 and through March 29 the cumulative spawn estimate is 11.1 nautical miles.

The next aerial survey and fishery update are scheduled for Thursday, March 30.

All aerial herring survey data can be reviewed online, including spawn lines and photos, in an interactive map application found at: <https://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=commercialbyareasoutheast.herring#maps> or scan:



Advisory Announcement web site: <http://www.adfg.alaska.gov/index.cfm?adfg=cfnews.main>

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<i>ADF&amp;G</i>	225-5195	772-3801		747-6688	465-4250	766-2830	784-3255
<i>AWT</i>	225-5111	772-3983	874-3215	747-3254	465-4000	766-2533	784-3220

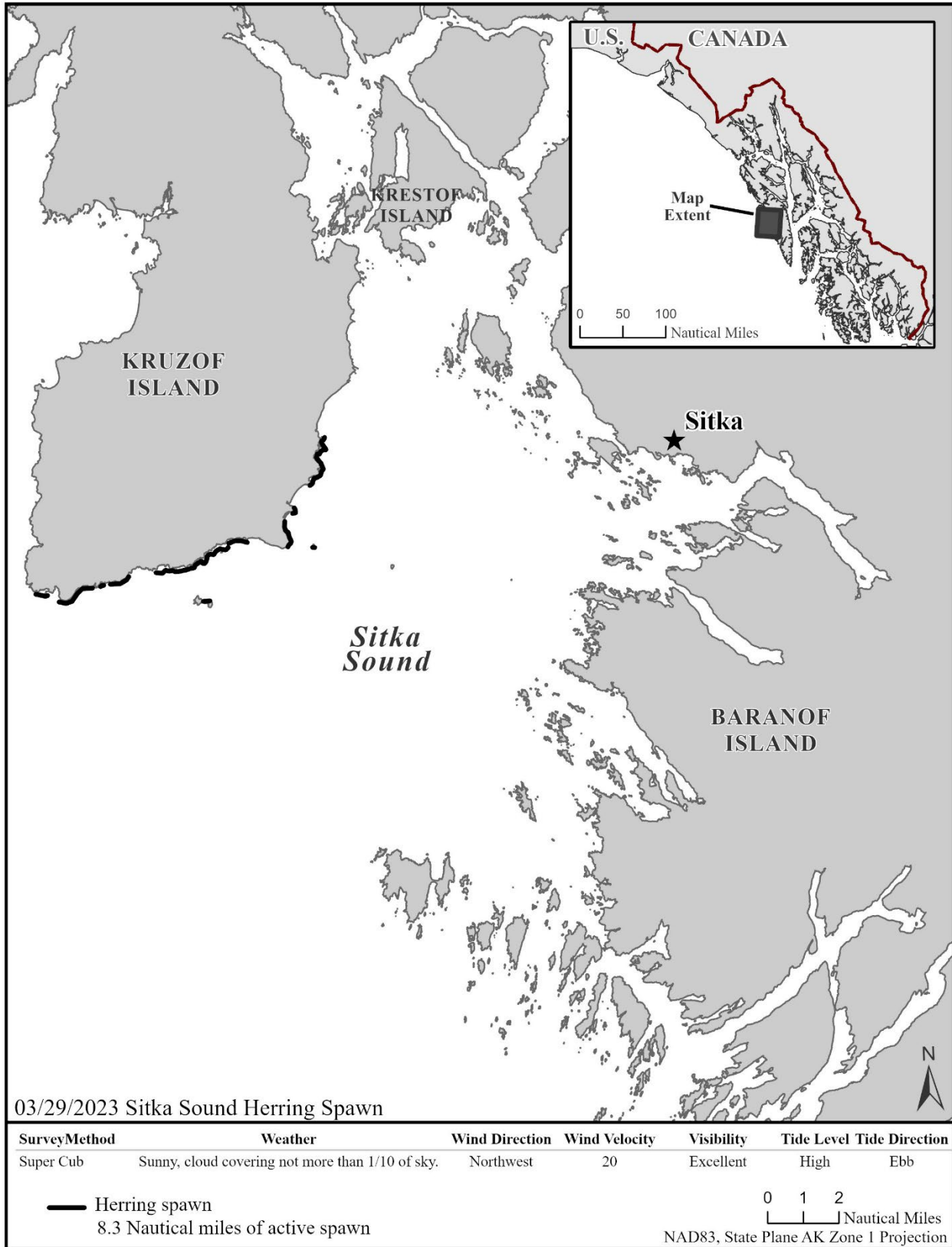


Figure 1.— Map of the active spawning areas in Sitka Sound during the aerial survey on March 29, 2023.

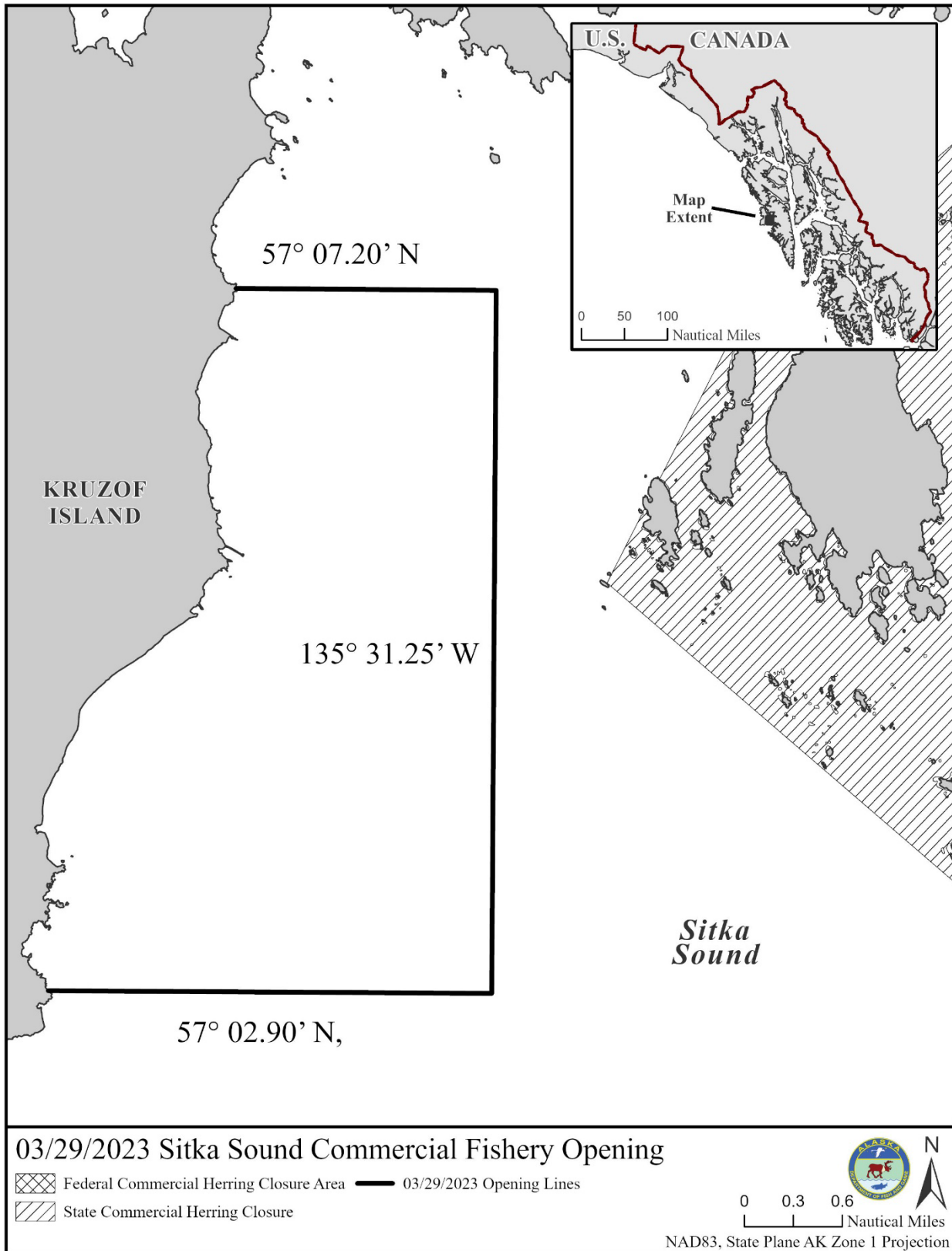


Figure 2.– Map of the Sitka Sound sac roe herring fishery opening on March 29, 2023.